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## Prize Winning Perfins Exhibit

Vladimir Munzberger (#3490)

[Editor's Note: Perfins Club member, Vladimir Munzberger (#3490) recently exhibited a prize winning One Frame Exhibit (16 pages) at the World Stamp Exhibition PRAGA 2008. His one frame exhibit "Perfins of Austrian Levant" received 85 points and a Vermeil medal. The following is an example of his exhibit which we believe contributes an interesting article for our readers.]

PRAGA 2008 was held September 12 – 14, 2008 on the Praga Fair Grounds. Over 45,000 visitors attended. It was a major world exhibition under the full patronage of the FIP, but it was specialized into four exhibition classes: Traditional, Postal History, Literature, and One Frame Exhibits. More information about the exhibition is available at the exhibition's web site <http://www.praga2008.cz>.

At the exhibition, four perfin exhibits were presented. These were the one discussed in this article; another One Frame Exhibit, "Perfins of the Bank of Greece", by Vladislav Beneš from the Czech Republic; a very nice 5-frame exhibit titled "Perfins of the Kingdom of Bavaria" by German collector Reiner von Scharpen; and another 5-frame exhibit, "Perfins used in Czech and Slovak Territory", by Julius Pisa from Slovakia.

I believe that perfins are not only holes thru the stamps, but they are an integral part of postal history and this is the way they should be presented to public. That means that perfins have to be demonstrated in all possible situations in which they had been really used (of course, it is not simple). My exhibit is based on the following general ideas:

1. Selection of the territory (in this case Austrian Levant). This also means one must have a certain minimal knowledge about this territory and historical background of its postal services.
2. Showing the wide range of perfins from the selected territory – as much as possible and preferably better perfins. (From my experience it is very difficult for one collector to put together all of the perfins from any selected territory.)
3. Showing the perfins on various stamps (preferably on the better ones.)

4. Presenting a detailed study of the perfins, if possible, (in this exhibit very limited) and any new findings in this field.
5. Showing the perfins used on various documents, especially with identified users of the perfins. For example, various cards, letters, stationary sent to various destinations (very difficult from Levant), or other postal documents (forms, etc.). It is also important to explain the starting and ending destinations, the correct postage fee, and some other specifics of the documents.
6. Reasonable description of the material (not too much, but all of the important things).
7. And, of course, one must also have in mind the FIP criteria for evaluation that will be used by the exhibition jury.

The above is one of the many possible ways that one can use to be relatively successful in exhibiting perfins. The degree that I succeeded in fulfilling these ideas and further improvements that could be made in my exhibit is another story and I will let our readers judge it.

The title page, two highlight pages of my exhibit, and two pages that explain how to differentiate between the two EOB perfins and between the two WBV perfins (which I do not believe has been published before my exhibit) are shown on the following pages.

The entire exhibit may be viewed on the Perfins Club website [www.perfins.org](http://www.perfins.org). [Editor's Note: For those members that do not have Internet access, I would be happy to print a copy and send it to you by regular mail. My contact information is on page 22.]

Any comments regarding exhibiting perfins are welcome. I am always looking for good pictures of all Austrian Levant perfins which are missing from my exhibit for documentation and study purposes. It would be even better if I could add some of these to my collection. My address is Vladimir Munzberger, PO Box 260, 160 41 Praha 6, CZECH REPUBLIC or email me at [jav.munz@volny.cz](mailto:jav.munz@volny.cz).

## Perfins of Austrian Levant

Levant is a common name for eastern Mediterranean and for the seaside area of original Ottoman Empire infringing South-eastern Europe, the Middle East and northern part of Africa. Aside from the own postal services also postal administrations of many other European countries operated there till the beginning of the WWI and they also issued special stamps for this territory. Among others it was also Austrian postal administration. On this territory Austrian stamp issues for Levant (currency Para, Piaster) and also specific issues for Crete (currency Centimes, Franc) were valid simultaneously.

Perfins originated in 1868 in England and gradually expanded into other countries of the world. In Austrian Monarchy the permission to use perfins was issued on 4 April 1877. On the Levant territory perfins were used by great international companies and banks, many of them originated from European countries. Therefore their same perfins can be found on stamps of more postal administrations (Ottoman, Austrian, German, Great Britain, French, Italian, Russian etc.). Existing perfins on stamps from this territory we can generally consider as less common up to very rare and on covers or cards as rare up to extremely rare. Overwhelming number of perfins on Austrian stamps can be found on the stamp issues for Levant, perfins on Austrian Crete stamp issues are purely outstanding.

Perfin	Domicile	Stamp Issue for				Page
		Levant		Crete		Nr.
APC	Jaffa		RR			2
B.A.	Candia				RRR	2
B.H.	Smyrna	X	R			3
BIO	Constantinople					2
C.A.S.	Constantinople		RRR		RRR	4
CL (1)	Constantinople		RRR			4
C.L (2)	Constantinople		RRR			-
CL (3)	Constantinople		RRR			-
CL (4)	Constantinople	X			RRR	5
CL/J	Jerusalem		RR			4
EOB (1)	Constantinople	X			RRR	6,7
EOB (2)	Smyrna		R			6
F.C.	Smyrna		RRR			10
G.C.	Trebizonde		RR			8
G.S.	Smyrna		RRR	X	RRR	8
H.C.	Samsun	X	RR			9
K.B.	Smyrna	X,X			RR	10,11
L.M.	Constantinople		RR			8
O.C.M.	Smyrna		R		RRR	4
O&M.	Jerusalem		RRR			6
P.M.	Smyrna	X,X	R			12,13
T.	Smyrna		RRR			-
WBV (1)	Constantinople	X,X				14,15
WBV (2)	Smyrna		R		RR	14
W.B.V. (3)	Smyrna		R		R	14
	This combination exists, but not present					
	This combination displayed					
	Own research					
X	Documented by letter or card					
R, RR, RRR	Scarcity factor, empty cell = common perfin					

This exhibit deals with perfins of Austrian Levant only and is organised by existing perfins carrying an effort to optimise the space on sheets. The overview and placing of perfins is obvious from the attached table. Also the scarcity factors of perfins based on own experience and research, are published there in this table for the first time.

Aside from the stamps with perfins also few unique covers and cards are displayed in the exhibit: perfinned stationery card G.S. (in literature the only one existing item is mentioned), this one even on the Crete stationery issue (page #8), probably the only one known cover with perfin H.C., but without identified user (page #9), outstanding cover "sample without value" with perfin K.B. (page #11), heavy registered letter with perfin P.M. (page #12) etc.

Page #16 displays very interesting usage of perfins on ordinary Austrian stamps of shipping company Lloyd, which served transport connections with the territory of Levant. Their home port was Trieste.

The own research is presented by the scarcity factors as well as better specifying the period of usage of about half of perfins. Also the pictures how to distinguish very similar perfins EOB (1) a (2), WBV (1) a (2) are published for the first time. New findings of 3 perfins on Crete stamp issues are also interesting.

Vladimír Münzberger, Czech republic

## Perfins of Austrian Levant - Highlights



Registered letter sent on 8 February 1894 from Smyrna to Hamburg in Germany, franked 4x 10 para + 2x 20 para + 2x 1 pia + 2 pia = 6 piaster for heavy registered letter abroad



Perfined stationery card – Crete issue for abroad 10 Cent. sent 31 May 1913 from Smyrna to Leipzig very rare item – in the literature only one such item is described on Austrian Levant stationery cards !



Cover sent on 23 December 1912 from Samsun to Hamburg in Germany franked 4x 10 para for letter abroad (still probably the only one letter known with this perfin)



5 Cent. – issue 1908 for Crete



15 Cent. – Crete issue 1906 Constantinople



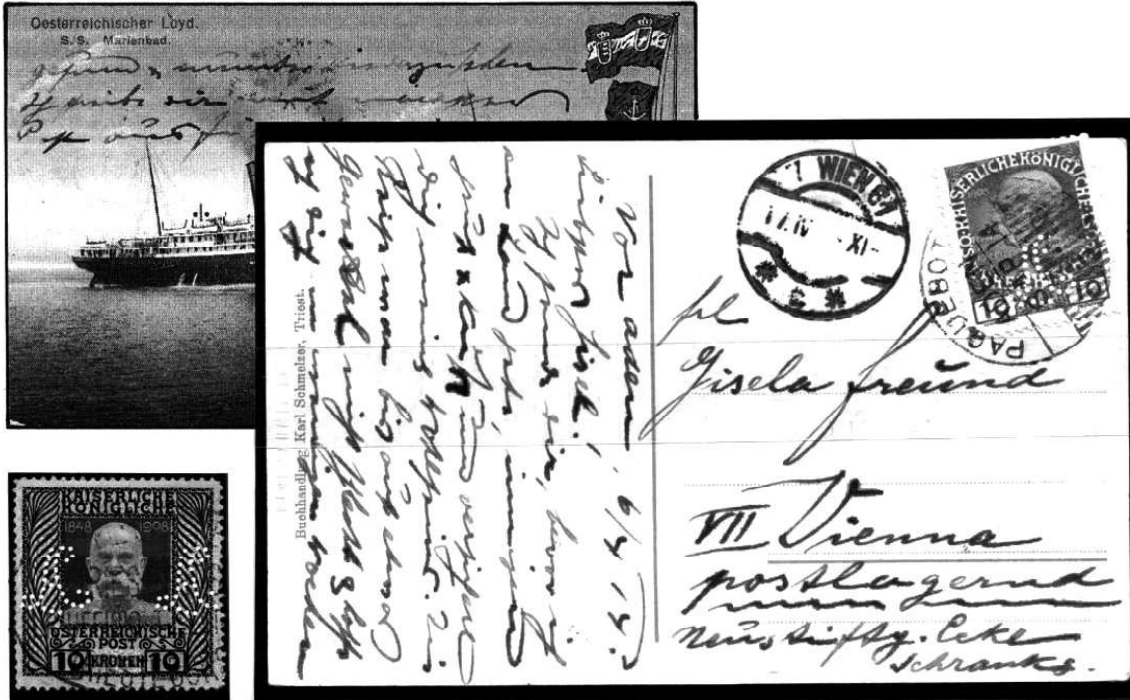
Rare letter – "Sample without value" sent 1897 from Smyrna to Halle in Germany; the additional rubber postmark presents the relation between perfin K.B. and F.C. Perfin F.C. of Friedrich Clemm was probably a successor of the perfin K.B.

K.B. → F.C.

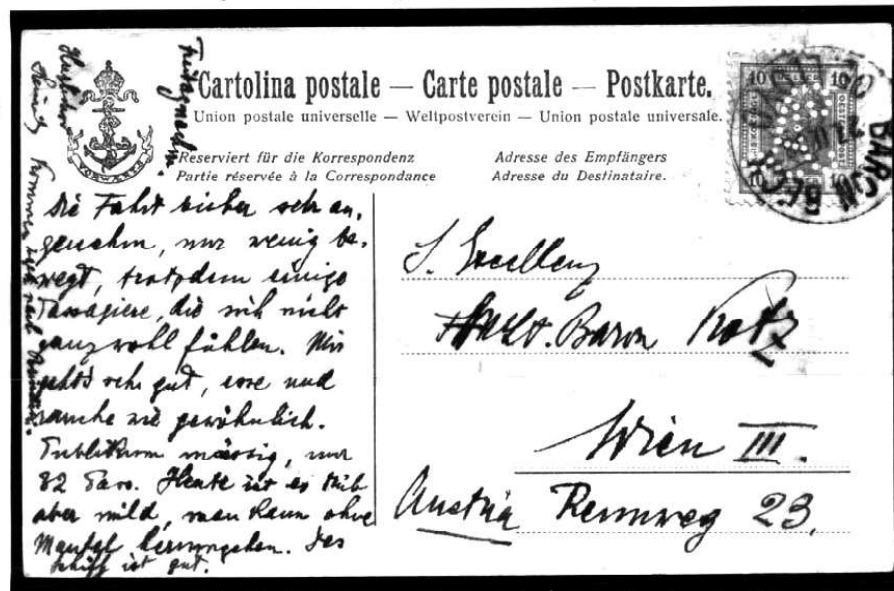
## Perfins of Austrian Levant - Highlights



Perfins (LA) – Austrian Lloyd, Trieste (1906-18)  
shipping company serving throughout the Levant ports



Picture postcard of the ship "S.S. Marienbad" sent 6 April 1914 from Aden to Vienna,  
departure cancel "PAQUEBOT / ADEN" of port Aden



Picture postcard of the ship "S.S. Baron Beck" sent 27 February 1908 from the ship to Vienna,  
cancelled by ship cancel "BARON BECK / OE LLOYD"



## Perfins of Austrian Levant

O&M.

Perfin O&M. – Observatoire & Musée, Jerusalem (after 1890 - 1899)



2 Piaster - Levant issue 1891

EOB

Perfin EOB (1) – Etablissements Orosdi Back, Constantinople (after 1900-13)



Levant issue 1901



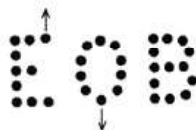
Levant issue 1903/05



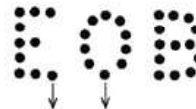
Levant issue 1908



15 Cent.- Crete issue 1906



EOB (1) – Constantinople



EOB (2) – Smyrna

EOB

Perfin EOB (2) – Etablissements Orosdi Back, Smyrna (after 1901-09)



Levant issue 1900



Levant issue 1903



Levant issue 1908

## Perfins of Austrian Levant

WBV

Perfin WBV (1) – Wiener Bank Verein, Constantinople (after 1900-1914)

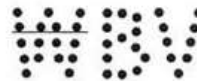


Levant issue 1905



Levant issue 1908

WBV (1) - Constantinople



WBV (2) - Smyrna

WBV

Perfin WBV (2) – Wiener Bank Verein, Smyrna (after 1908-1914)



← Levant issue 1908 →

10 Cent. – issue 1908 for Crete

WBV

Perfin W.B.V. (3) – Wiener Bank Verein, Smyrna (after 1908-1913)



← Levant issue 1908 →

10 Cent. – issue 1908 for Crete